

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 22 are pending in the application. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1 – 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner has specifically asserted that the claims are inaccurate because they claim a pallet and the pre-form is not part of the pallet. Claims 1, 7 and 13 have been amended to claim a reconfigurable pallet system, a pallet system and a reconfigurable pallet system, respectively. Applicants respectively note that the pre-form is a component of the pallet system as claimed.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 – 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by Shen et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,644,637). In view of the comments and amendments herein, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants note that each of claims 1, 7, 13 and 18 include a pre-form that is selectively attached to the pallet base to define a position of the modular stanchions along the x and y axes. Shen et al. fails to teach or suggest a pre-form that is selectively attached to the pallet base to define a position of the modular stanchions along the x and y axes.

Shen et al. discloses a reconfigurable workholding fixture 12 that supports a workpiece 10. The fixture 12 includes locator posts 22 that are clamped to a guide rail 20. Actuated clamping elements 24 and support elements 26 are selectively attachable to the fixture 12. The locator posts 22 include pins 23 that are shaped and positioned to support the workpiece 10 (see Col. 4, Lines 45 – 48). The locator posts 22 do not define a position of the modular stanchions along x and y axes. More specifically, the locator posts 22 function in hand with the clamping elements 24 and the support elements 26 to support the workpiece 10. Therefore, Shen et al. fails to teach or suggest a pre-form that is selectively attached to the pallet base to define a position of the modular stanchions along the x and y axes, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

With regard to claims 2 – 6, 8 – 12, 14 – 17 and 19 – 22, Applicants note that each ultimately depends from one of claims 1, 7, 13 and 18, which define over the prior art, as discussed in detail above. Therefore, claims 2 – 6, 8 – 12, 14 – 17 and 19 – 22 also define over the prior art for at least the reasons with respect to claims 1, 7, 13 and 18, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sotonyi (U.S. Pat. No. 3,624,799). In view of the comments and amendments herein, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed in detail above, each of claims 1, 7, 13 and 18 include a pre-form that is selectively attached to the pallet base to define a position of the modular stanchions along the x and y axes. Sotonyi fails to teach or suggest a pre-form that is selectively attached to the pallet base to define a position of the modular stanchions along the x and y axes.

Sotonyi discloses a device for detachably fastening glass frames to a work table. A retaining bar 6 is provided and is adjustable along a single axis (arrow 7). The glass frame or workpiece 1 is placed on the table and a position of the workpiece 1 is limited by the retaining bar 6. Blocks 9 retain the workpiece 1 and the locations of the blocks 9 are defined by the workpiece 1 itself. In other words, the workpiece 1 is placed on the table 3 and the blocks 9 are assembled onto the table 3 afterward to retain the workpiece 1 in position.

Sotonyi functions opposite to the present invention as claimed. More specifically, the retention components or modular stanchions of the present invention are placed onto the base using the pre-form to define their respective x-y locations. The workpiece is then supported on the positioned stanchions. Therefore, Sotonyi fails to teach or suggest a pre-form that is selectively attached to the pallet base to define a position of the modular stanchions along the x and y axes and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

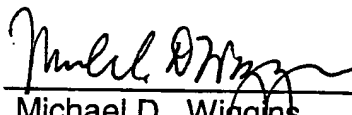
With regard to claims 4, 5, 10, 11, 16 and 21, Applicants note that each ultimately depends from one of claims 1, 7, 13 and 18, which define over the prior art, as discussed in detail above. Therefore, claims 4, 5, 10, 11, 16 and 21 also define over the prior art for at least the reasons with respect to claims 1, 7, 13 and 18, and reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the General Motors Legal Staff at (313) 665-4708.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 
Michael D. Wiggins
Reg. No. 34,754

KATHRYN A. MARRA
GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION
300 RENAISSANCE CENTER
MAIL CODE 482-C23-B21
P.O. BOX 300
DETROIT, MI 48265-3000

Serial No. 10/721,706